



REPORT ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN BLOOMINGTON AND MONROE COUNTY CITY OF BLOOMINGTON COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

FOREWORD

In the fall of 2001, members of the City of Bloomington Commission on the Status of Women (BCSW) pored over findings in *The Status of Women in Indiana*, a report produced by the Institute for Women's Policy Research to establish baseline measures of the status of women. Of the fifty states, and the District of Columbia, Indiana ranks 43rd for reproductive rights and 44th in employment and earnings. Women have nowhere near adequate political representation in elected office, and Indiana falls far below the national average of women with four years or more of college education. These data make it plain that despite the fact that women have made significant economic, political and social strides since the passage of women's suffrage, we're still far from achieving gender equality.

Since one of the objectives of the BCSW is to monitor federal, state and local policies for their impact on Bloomington women and to make recommendations for appropriate actions to assure women's equity, commissioners felt strongly that we should produce a report specific to the status of women in our community. Indeed, the status of individual women is impacted by their geographical location, their education, their age, race and sexual orientation. We hope our report informs local citizens about the progress of women in Bloomington, provides information about women's progress in achieving rights and opportunities, identifies and measures remaining barriers to equality, and helps us examine the nature of women's progress in Bloomington. The data is intended to provide important baseline indicators and help improve the ability of members of our community to more effectively address women's issues.

We were fortunate to have a good model for our work in the *Status of Women in Indiana* report, and support from Charlotte Zietlow, who chaired the Indiana Advisory Committee, Pete Giordano, director of the City of Bloomington's Community and Family Resources Department, and interested commission members and other talented volunteers. That said, the path to

producing this report was fraught with challenges. Local data about women's employment and educational attainment, and personal well-being proved difficult to unearth. We immediately experienced set-backs simply because data were not disaggregated by gender, or because there was no central data source. In other cases, for example with the local school district and the judicial system, we could not secure permission to access information.

Given the local data collection challenges, we turned to other public data sources. Staff from the City of Bloomington Community and Family Resources Department, namely Lee Bowlen with the able assistance of Seth Brooke, pulled data from the U.S. Census Bureau (2000) and other public information systems, and organized it for our needs. The source of most of the data contained in the reports we are releasing is a combination of Census data, national comparison data from the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) report, and locally gathered data.

We continue to be reminded of the need to examine and monitor the status of women. For example, wage gaps persist even as states implement equal pay acts for public sector employees, enact bills requiring pay equity studies, and in 2005, promote the Equal Pay Remedies and Enforcement Act. These efforts require data to document disparities and measure progress. Yet, in February, 2005, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) proposed to eliminate gender as a reporting category in a revision of the 'Report on Employment, Payroll, and Hours' (BLS-790). Clearly, the collection of gender specific data is one way to monitor wage disparities and to help ensure that employers are accountable for gender discrimination in the workplace.

Encouragement to produce this report came from many sources, but I want to acknowledge the inspiration provided by countless non-profit women's advocacy groups including the IWPR, a public policy research organization dedicated to informing and stimulating the debate on public policy issues of importance to women; Middle Way House, whose mission is to end violence in the lives of women and children by implementing or sponsoring activities and programs aimed at achieving individual and social change; governmental organizations including our own City of Bloomington Community and Family Resources Department, which serves to identify the community's social needs and to help develop solutions to address these needs; and the City of

Bloomington Commission on the Status of Women. These groups work tirelessly to improve the conditions and quality of life for women in our community.

Readers of the Commission on the Status of Women's *Report on the Status of Women in Bloomington and Monroe County* are encouraged to study, question and use the information provided here to advance the status of women and enrich our community by dedicating ourselves to establishing gender equity.

Jillian Kinzie
Chair, City of Bloomington Commission on the Status of Women



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INTRODUCTION

Beginning in 2005, the City of Bloomington Commission on the Status of Women will release five topical reports on the status of women – Economics, Employment and the Workplace; Political Participation and Leadership; Education; Victimization, Rights and Justice; and Health and Well-Being. These reports will be produced as a series to make them easier to print and update on an ongoing basis. We strongly recommend that readers of our report also review *The Status of Women in Indiana* report and other projects conducted by the Institute for Women's Policy Research (see www.iwpr.org) to get a fuller understanding of the status of women in Indiana and on a national level. We provide an overview of the state information here to offer readers some information about the broader context in which our work is situated.

Data about the status of women needs to be viewed in the context of data about the status of all citizens of Indiana, particularly when it comes to educational attainment, earnings, public assistance programs and other economic criteria. The economic status of Indiana women is relatively poor, the majority of policy makers are male, and Indiana is a fiscally conservative state, which leads to low taxes and low funding of public assistance programs. Indiana has one first-class city, Indianapolis (population over 350,000 but under 500,000), and 16 second-class cities. Indiana is a fiscally conservative state with a distinctly blue-collar economy. Indiana is one of the lowest states in terms of personal tax burden – ranked fourteenth on a scale where first is lowest. It is the lowest state in spending for both state and local governments. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that in recent years, both the Voucher Program and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) have received strong support from the state. Participation in public office has been difficult for women in Indiana, but there are some bright spots.

Indiana women ranked below the median on most of the composite indices calculated by IWPR. The overview of *The Status of Women in Indiana* yields the following information on key

indicators: of the fifty states and the District of Columbia, Indiana ranks 24th, just above the middle for health and well-being and for political participation, but falls to 36th in economic autonomy and 44th in employment and earnings. Indiana does not ensure equal rights for women. An evaluation of Indiana's women's status compared with goals set for women's ideal status earns Indiana the grades of C+ in health and well-being, C in political participation, C- in economic autonomy, D- in employment and earnings, and an F in reproductive rights.

Indiana is the 14th largest state in the country with about 5.9 million people living within its borders; about 3 million of them are women. At the time of this survey, Indiana's women were less diverse than women nationally with proportionally fewer immigrants.

Women in Indiana register and vote at rates that are near average for the country as a whole, but are disproportionately under-represented in elected office. Women in Indiana participate in the workforce slightly more but earn lower wages and work less. They earn lower wages and work as managers or professionals much less often than women in the nation as a whole. At 48th, women's earnings in relation to men's are also consistently lower than in most of the country.

Indiana illustrates many of the difficult obstacles still facing women in the U.S. Although women as a whole are seeing important changes in their lives that by now lead to equality with men, they still lack many of the legal guarantees that would allow them to achieve the same equality.

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CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP/POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Women comprise approximately 51% of the population. However, “when the 108th Congress convened, 86 percent of its members were male. This places the United States 60th worldwide in terms of the number of women serving in the national legislature. These large gender disparities are also evident at the state and local levels: 86 percent of state governors, 88 percent of big city mayors, and 78 percent of state legislators are men.” (Brown Policy Report)

If women want to affect change in their lives and those of others within the community, state, country and world, they must be actively engaged. This is particularly important in the civic arena, which shapes the policy of our daily lives. This engagement can take varying forms, from sitting on a local council or commission, to running for political office from county commissioner to United States President.

This section of the data report will review various civic leadership roles, the number of women within the various roles, and how this representation or lack thereof impacts the lives of women, first at a general level, and then more specifically within Bloomington and Monroe County.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Political participation by women is necessary to affect the decisions and policies that impact their daily lives. Women have different concerns than men, and often place different values on the concerns that they have in common with men. Political participation can range from voting, to addressing labels for a feminist candidate, to sitting on a local council or commission, to running for political office. Women’s political participation is the only way to ensure that women’s lives, opinions and ideas are represented. Also, women’s political participation is important as democracy is strengthened through equal representation.

*As Eleanor Roosevelt put it,
“Only women in power would consider the needs of women without power.”*

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Research on women as political candidates suggests that they generally win elected office at rates similar to men, but far fewer women run for office (National Women's Political Caucus, 1994). In fact, per the Brown Policy Report, "Men are 71 percent more likely than women to run for office."

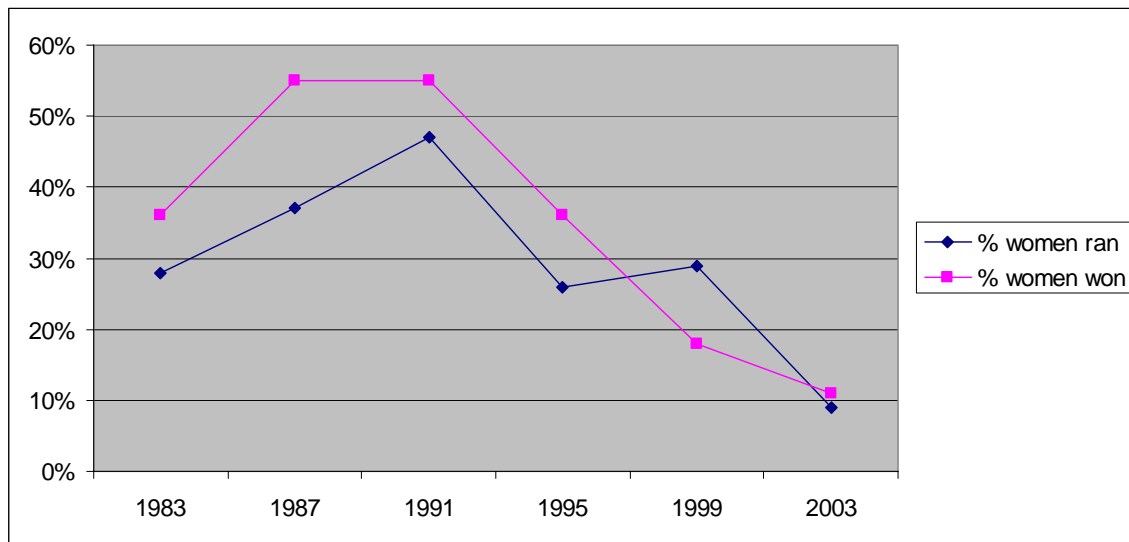
Regardless of party affiliation, female officeholders are more likely than males to support women's agendas (Center for American Women and Politics [CAWP], 1991). In addition, legislatures with larger proportions of female elected officials tend to address women's issues more often and more seriously than those with fewer representatives (Dodson, 1991; Thomas, 1994). Finally, representation through institutions such as women's commissions or women's legislative caucuses can both provide ongoing channels for expressing women's concerns and make policymakers more accessible to women, especially when those institutions work closely with women's organizations (Stetson and Mazur, 1995).

Policies and practices that might encourage women to run for office—including those that would help them challenge incumbents—can be integral to increasing women's political voice (Burrell, 1994). Such policies include campaign finance reform, recruitment of female candidates by political parties, and fair and equal media treatment for male and female candidates.

Bloomington Female Elected Officials – 2003

- City Clerk – Regina Moore
- Common Council – 1/9 – District I – Patricia Cole

Bloomington Female Elected Officials – 1983 to 2003



There has been a noticeable decline in both the percentage of women running for city elected positions, as well as the percentage winning, since the 1991 elections. This trend must be turned around if women are to achieve parity in representation and, consequently impact policies at the city level.

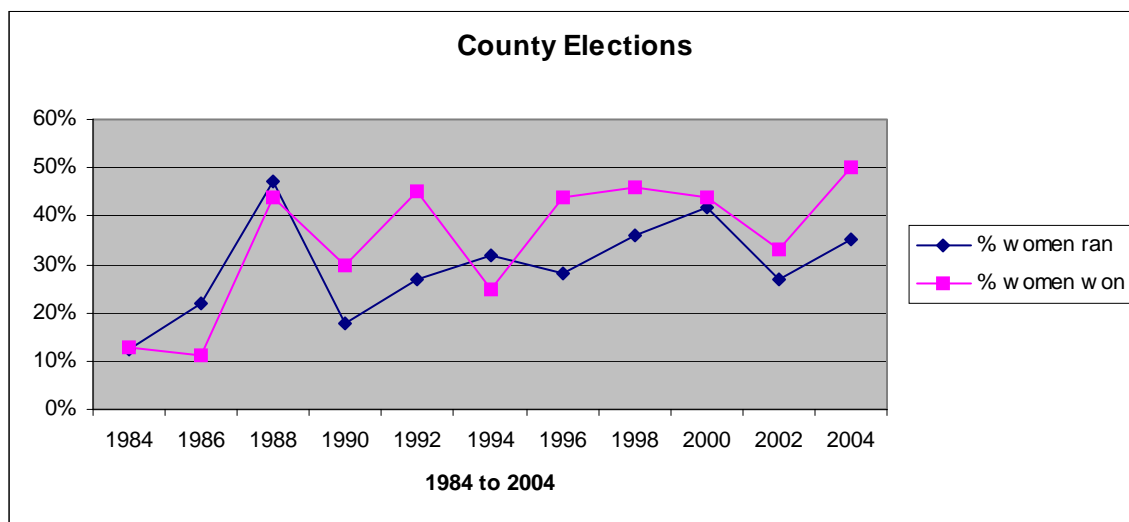
Monroe County Female Elected Officials – 2002

- Board of Commissioners – 2/3 – Joyce Poling, District 2; Iris Kiesling, District 3
- County Council – 2/7 – Susan L. West, District 1; Martha Hawk, District 3
- Assessor – Judith Ann Sharp
- Auditor – Barbara Clark
- Judge, Div 4 – Elizabeth Mann
- Judge, Div 7 – Viola J. Taliaferro
- Recorder – Pat Haley
- Treasurer – Patricia Jeffries

Monroe County Female Elected Officials – 2004

- Board of Commissioners – 2/3 – Joyce Poling, District 2; Iris Kiesling, District 3
- County Council – 3/7 – Susan L. West, District 1; Martha Hawk, District 3; Sophia Travis, At Large
- Auditor – Sandy Neumann
- Judge, Div 4 – Mary Ellen Diekhoff
- Recorder – Pat Haley
- Treasurer – Barbara Clark

Monroe County Female Elected Officials – 1984 to 2004



A sharper decrease in women running and winning occurred in approximately 1990, but since that time, with the exception of 2002, it appears the percentage of women running and winning at

the county level has almost steadily increased, with a current percentage of 50% in the recent 2004 elections.

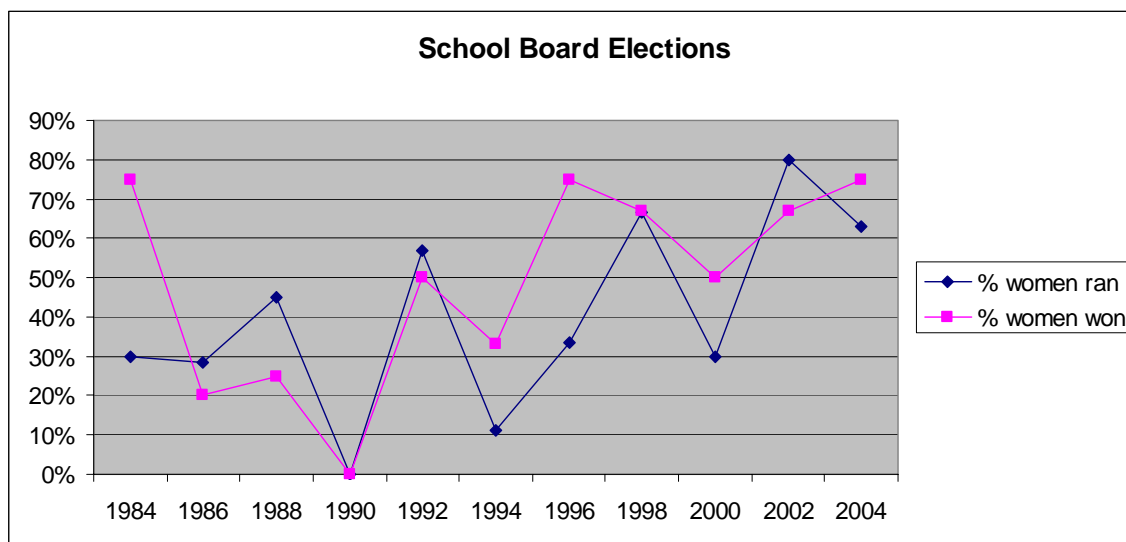
Monroe County School Board Female Representatives – 2002

- District 3 – Janice Nelson
- District 7 – Cheryl Brown

Monroe County School Board Female Representatives – 2004

- District 2 – Sue Wanzer
- District 5 – Teresa Grossi
- District 6 – Lois Sabo-Skelton

Monroe County Female School Board Representatives – 1984 to 2004



The percentage of women running and winning elections at the School Board level seems to fluctuate much more than the other levels of office, but the overall trend since the low point of 0% in 1990, seems to be a sporadic increase, with the 2004 percentage of 75%.

Source: Missing: Information About Women's Lives. A report from the National Council for Research on Women.

1961: President John F. Kennedy establishes the Commission on the Status of Women to recommend ways to overcome barriers to women's full participation as citizens. Individuals who work on the Commission draw on data developed by the Labor Department to establish academic and public policy research centers and found national organizations such as WEAL and NOW to advance the Commission's recommendations.

1974: President Gerald Ford launches an initiative that invigorates efforts to root out remaining discriminatory barriers. The National Commission on the Observation of International Women's Year sets out "to promote equality between men and women." The research and surveys presented by the commission lead to an ambitious Plan of Action developed by the First National Women's Conference in Houston in November 1977.

1995: The United States joins 188 other governments in Beijing to adopt a Platform for Action on women's rights and public policy in 12 critical areas of concern at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women. President Bill Clinton appoints a high-level President's Interagency Council on Women to implement those strategies in the United States. As part of its work, the Council produces **America's Commitment: Women 2000** which describes programs for women throughout the government, with contacts and names for easy access.

2001: The President's Interagency Council on Women is disbanded, as is the White House Office of Women's Initiatives and Outreach.

Appointed Officials

Per the Appointed Policy Makers in State Government: Five-Year Trend Analysis, "Women's progress as holders of appointed executive branch policy leadership positions has not been steady in recent years. Between 1999 and 2003, women's share of top-ranking gubernatorial appointments increased and then declined, but remained above the 1999 level. More specifically, women appointed policy leaders 2003 in Indiana was 32.7%. Women comprise 51.0% of the population in Indiana. Indiana ranked 29th in 1999, 23rd in 2001 and 26th in 2003."

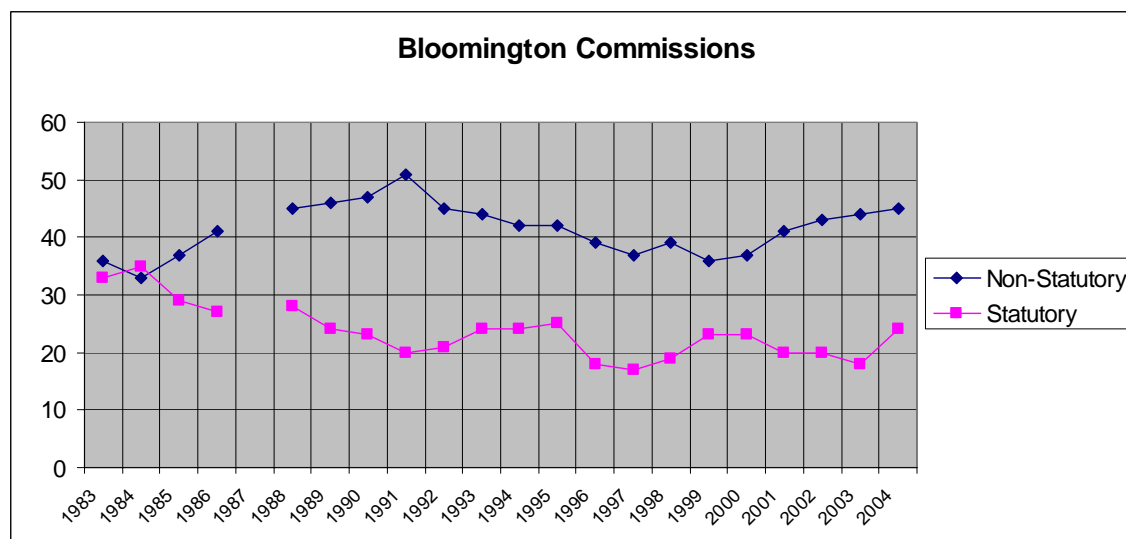
Appointed positions at the city and county level were not tracked for this version of the City of Bloomington Commission on the Status of Women Data Report, but plans are to incorporate this in the next update.

City of Bloomington Commissions – 2004

It is important to notice the disparity in female-to-male representation between statutory and non-statutory commissions, i.e. women are represented in greater numbers on the non-statutory commissions. Information regarding gender of the applicants for either type of board is not available. However, plans are to begin tracking this information for future updates to this report.

***Note:** The numbers that follow the title of each commission represent: #of women/# of commissioners. Commissions are either Non-Statutory or Statutory (Statutory commissions are created, and actions regulated, by Indiana law.) Bold text denotes Statutory commissions.*

- Animal Control Commission – 4/5
- Arts Commission – 4/9
- Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety Commission – 2/6
- Commission on the Status of Black Males – 1/6
- Community and Family Resources Commission – 3/9
- **Economic Development Commission – 1/5**
- Environmental Commission – 5/8
- Historic Preservation Commission – 6/11
- **Housing Authority – 1/7**
- Housing Quality Appeals – 3/7
- Human Rights Commission – 5/7
- **Industrial Development Advisory Commission – 4/9**
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Commission – 5/6
- **Park Commission – 1/4**
- **Plan Commission – 2/10**
- **Public Safety Board – 2/5**
- **Public Transportation Corp. Board – 1/5**
- **Public Works Board – 2/3**
- **Redevelopment Commission – 0/3**
- Telecommunications Council – 0/5
- Traffic Commission – 1/9
- Tree Commission – 4/7
- **Bloomington Urban Enterprise Association – 2/11**
- **Utilities Service Board – 1/9**
- Commission on Status of Women – 7/7
- **Zoning Appeals Board – 1/5**



INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES

Women's institutional resources can play an important role in providing information about women's issues and attracting the attention of policymakers and the public to women's political concerns. They can also serve as an access point for women and women's groups to express their interests to public officials. Thus such institutions can ensure that women's issues remain on the political agenda.

City of Bloomington Commission on the Status of Women

One such institutional resource, at the city level, is the City of Bloomington Commission on the Status of Women. The ordinance to create the Commission on the Status of Women was introduced by Charlotte Zietlow, City Council President, in December 1973. Mayor Frank McCloskey vetoed the ordinance on the grounds that it was redundant to the Human Rights Commission, but his veto was overruled and the ordinance was passed in February 1974. (Note the importance of having female elected representation in establishing this important institutional resource!) The first meeting was held on June 25, 1974, with twelve commissioners in attendance.

The City of Bloomington Commission on the Status of Women is a group of citizens appointed by the Mayor and Common Council of the City of Bloomington, chosen to represent the diversity of women's interests in the community. The Commission's responsibilities include

exploring issues relevant to women and informing the community of these issues through news media, forums, workshops and educational materials. The Commission is dedicated to addressing the concerns, interests and needs of women in our community. The Commission explores women's issues, celebrates their accomplishments and works to promote solutions to the problems and challenges faced by women. The Commission's purpose is to assure that women and men have equal opportunity to function fully and optimally as citizens of Bloomington, as equal participants in the economy, in politics and government, in education, in social development, in the system of justice, and in all other facets of life. To these ends the Commission identifies needs, resources, and gaps in resources for women; monitors federal, state, and local policies and their impact on women; stimulates and encourages legislation, issues publications, and does all it can to help improve opportunities for women in the community.

The goals of the Commission include:

- To identify the needs of, resources for, and services available for women in Bloomington;
- To monitor federal, state and local policies for their impact on Bloomington women and to make recommendations to the Community and Family Resources Department for appropriate actions to assure women's equity;
- To stimulate and encourage legislation for the development of social services of benefit to women in Bloomington and the State of Indiana;
- To issue publications, materials, research findings and legislative information to educate the community about the goals of the Commission;
- To assure a coordinated City-wide effort to improve opportunities for Bloomington women;
- To maintain close liaison with other women's commissions and advocacy groups throughout the state, and with other local, state or federal programs that relate to the needs, problems and opportunities of women;
- To maintain close liaison with federal efforts in programs affecting women to ensure appropriate City participation, and to consolidate efforts at the local level.

Current Commissioners include:

- Jillian Kinzie, Chair
- Dorothy Saltzman
- Toby Strout
- Hannia Burke-Aguero
- Melanie Castillo-Cullather
- Cathi Crabtree
- Deborah O'Brien

Staff: Craig Brenner, Liaison, and Lee Bowlen, City of Bloomington Community and Family Resources Department

References:

1. **Status of Women in Indiana: Politics, Economics, Health, Demographics.** Institute for Women's Policy Research. Indiana Commission on the Status of Women. (Note: Format and content of this report, in addition to some verbiage, draws heavily from the Indiana Commission on the Status of Women report.)
2. **Appointed Policy Makers in State Government: Five-Year Trend Analysis: Gender, Race and Ethnicity** (From A Report of the Center for Women in Government & Civil Society, University at Albany, State University of New York, Winter 2004)
3. **Missing: Information About Women's Lives.** A report from the National Council for Research on Women, March 2004.
4. **Brown Policy Report: Why Don't Women Run for Office?** Jennifer L. Lawless, Brown University and Richard L. Fox, Union College, January 2004.
5. **Closing the Leadership Gap: Why Women Can and Must Help Run the World,** Marie C. Wilson, 2004 Viking Penguin.